

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK  
Office of the Director  
Washington, D. C.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

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Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work, today made public a summarization of a series of reports disclosing progress made by the Civilian Conservation Corps in improving conditions for game and other wild life. In this summary, Director Fechner stated that the reports, which were forwarded to his office by the various bureaus and services which cooperate in the conduct of CCC work activities, disclosed that the availability of CCC labor had enabled federal and state authorities to advance wild life conservation programs to the point where it is possible to state that migratory birds and other species of game have a real chance for survival despite the encroachments of modern civilization.

"I am advised by Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, chief of the U. S. Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture," Director Fechner said, "that today the United States has a nation-wide program under way that promises a brighter future for our wild life resources. Officials of the other services and bureaus, which include the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture and the National Park Service, the Division of Grazing, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Office of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, state that as a result of the availability of CCC labor they have been able to make substantial progress in improving conditions for wild life in the areas over which they have jurisdiction.

"The CCC's contribution to wildlife conservation programs has been both direct and indirect. The reports show the CCC has aided wild life directly by assisting the Biological Survey expand and develop a nation-wide system of wildlife refuges without parallel in any other country throughout the world. From twenty-two to twenty-six CCC companies have been engaged in refuge development work under the supervision of the Biological Survey.

"A second direct aid for wild life has come through the development of special areas for wild life on the part of other services, the taking of censuses of game on federal properties, and the improvement of fishing conditions on both federal and state lands. During deep snows and cold weather, animals and birds have been fed by members of the Corps, thus preventing starvation.

"Five thousand miles of streams have been improved for fish habitat. Sometimes this meant slowing up streams that were too swift; often it meant speeding up sluggish ones. Debris was removed and fish shelters built. More than 3,800 rearing ponds have been constructed so that small fish may reach maturity, thus insuring a check in the rapid disappearance of game fish. Many federal and state fish hatcheries have been improved and expanded by CCC labor, and the fish-planting program has been greatly facilitated by enrollees. Nearly 200,000,000 fish have been planted in forest streams and lakes. It is estimated that through CCC labor, the fish egg production capacities of federal hatcheries have been expanded by more than 20,000,000 eggs annually.

"Indirectly, the advancement of a nation-wide reforestation program by the CCC, while primarily conducted for the purpose of improving conditions for

tree growth, has increased the amount of food or 'browse' available for wildlife, provided healthy protective covering and breeding places for game and afforded the natural habitat of many game species better protection from forest fires.

"Use of Civilian Conservation Corps men by the various federal agencies has also been influential in promoting the recognition of the need for a national wild life program by all the Government's land-administering agencies. Wildlife technicians have been consulted in regard to the various programs for CCC work, and the result has been a better coordination of all activities affecting wild life. The diversity of the CCC work is also promoting better cooperation among state and local agencies, as well as those of the federal Government."

In his report to the Director on the part played by the CCC in the work of the Biological Survey, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief of the Biological Survey, had this to say:

"For the first time in our history, this country now has a nation-wide program under way that promises a future for our wild life resources, and the Civilian Conservation Corps is playing an important part in this program.

"It has been my pleasure to have had contact with the CCC since its inception, and I have visited hundreds of camps scattered over the United States, on national forests and on state lands, as well as our own.

"Since June 30, 1933, the federal Government has acquired more than a million and a half acres for wildlife refuges. The Biological Survey has been developing these areas to make them suitable for the birds and to make it possible to administer them efficiently. The Survey has formulated the program and has supervised the work. The CCC camps have furnished man-power on many of them.

"The CCC boys have constructed dikes, dams, and other water-control structures to stabilize water levels and store water. Stabilizing the level of shallow fresh-water areas has permitted the growth of aquatic and other vegetation that will furnish food for the birds. Storage helps to maintain a continuous supply of water in the drier areas, especially in the important waterfowl-nesting regions of the Northwest. The boys have also developed springs and wells.

"Where food plants for the birds were lacking, the CCC camps have planted them. They have collected seeds and tubers where the plants are abundant and stored them for planting at the right time. The plantings have also included shrubs and trees and field crops that are left for the waterfowl and upland game birds.

"Nesting islands have been built. Fences have been erected to protect wild life food and cover from destruction by stock. Erosion-control work has been carried on to prevent silting of waterfowl ponds and to protect the ranges of big-game animals.

"All of these activities," Dr. Gabrielson explained, "will make the areas into better habitat for the birds - refuges in fact as well as in name. Other work by CCC camps is directed toward the same end by making it possible for the refuge supervisors to protect the birds more efficiently. Truck trails, fire lanes, lookout towers, and service buildings have been constructed, to promote the efficient operation of the refuges.

"Our CCC camps have also been invaluable wild life relief agencies in times of emergency. When drought threatened the birds, boys from the camps helped in

gathering up the birds on dried-up areas and releasing them on refuges where the water supply had been conserved. During severe winter weather, the boys also helped the birds out by emergency winter-feeding activities.

"All these developments are promoting the greatest feeling of encouragement that American wildlife conservationists have ever known."

In its report, the Forest Service states, in part:

"Forests provide shelter, cover and breeding grounds for big game and bird life and by their shade and soil-holding qualities have an enormous direct influence in maintaining both the continuous flow and temperature of streams, both essential to fish life. Construction of fish rearing ponds, development of lakes and streams to make conditions more suitable for fish and stocking them with fish, game counts and observations, and the seeding and planting of shrubs, vines, et cetera, for wild life food and cover, constitute the principal wild life activities of the camps on forest lands. They contribute directly to plan-wise management of the wild life resources.

"In addition to the activities which are designed to contribute directly to wild life conservation, there are many additional activities and projects which contribute indirectly. The forest improvement program of the CCC, in addition to improving the conditions for the growth of trees, has also increased the amount of food or 'browse' available for wildlife and provides a healthy protective covering. Fire prevention work also lessens the danger that food supplies as well as wild life itself will be destroyed by fires. Water conservation projects - the planting of trees in generally treeless areas - in fact, practically every project carried on by the CCC in the forest contributes indirectly to the betterment of wild life conditions.

"Among the principal wild life activities of the soil erosion control camps are the seeding and planting of vines, shrubs, and other woody vegetation providing wild life food and cover."

The following report from the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior briefly outlines the nature of the wild life projects carried on in national parks and monuments and state, county, and metropolitan parks.

"Although artificial developments are kept to a minimum in the wilderness areas of the national parks, certain recreational features are desirable, and have been installed, chiefly in the eastern parks. Among such projects are:

"The construction of fish rearing ponds and the restocking with fish of streams in national parks, where fishing is permitted, to replace fish removed by anglers. In order to reduce transportation costs, to acclimate the fish to location conditions, and to lower the mortality resulting from transfer, rearing ponds are being established in the various national parks.

"Food and Cover Planting and Seeding. Planting projects have been undertaken particularly in the eastern areas where man has restricted the natural wildlife food supply. Lake and pond development has also been carried on in these areas. Stream development has been carried on particularly where logging or other human interference has modified the streams. Restoration of water courses, in addition to accomplishing other functions, makes possible normal fish migrations.

"The construction of dams, partially as an aid to swimming and better fishing and partially to restore the natural conditions of the parks. Stream and lake bank protection, which prevents serious erosion along streams whose headwaters have been denuded by excessive grazing, lumbering, or man-caused fires.

The construction of flumes and soil retaining walls to prevent excessive erosion.  
Field planting or seeding to restore natural conditions.

"In addition to the work in the national parks which has been directly beneficial to wild life, a survey of the work of the CCC on state, county, and metropolitan parks shows that much work has been done on such projects as these:

1. Construction of water impounding dams.
2. Stream and lake bank protection.
3. Sheet erosion planting.
4. Water control structures other than dams.
5. Field planting and seeding.
6. Construction of fish rearing ponds.
7. Food and cover planting and seeding.
8. Lake and pond development.
9. Fish stocking.
10. Stream improvement.

"There are more than 500 parks of this nature widely distributed throughout the country, so situated in most cases as to constitute nuclei to provide food and cover for wildlife and also a stock which will naturally diffuse into the contiguous territories as increases occur within the parks."

Several CCC companies, Mr. Fechner pointed out, have been assigned to the development of fish hatcheries where the work has been supervised by the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries. In a brief survey of the work on these projects, the Bureau of Fisheries said:

"At the York Pond fish hatchery, in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, for example, CCC men have been engaged in developing a plant which will be the Bureau's chief source of supply for brook trout eggs for the entire country. Ponds, buildings, and a water supply system have been developed. When completed, this hatchery will have a trout egg capacity of between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 eggs annually.

"Similar projects have been carried on by detachments of men at the state fish hatchery at Hackettstown, New Jersey, at Indian Camp Creek, in South Carolina, at La Mar, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere.

"The Bureau of Fisheries has also cooperated with the Forest Service in the planning of stream improvement operations which have been carried out by the CCC on national forests."

Some wild life activities have been undertaken by the Indian CCC workers working on Indian reservations. A few of the reservations have stocked game birds, and during the last winter the Indian CCC men provided shelters for native birds on several of the reservations. Beaver have been placed in some of the streams, and deer at some of the reservations, and at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, and Crow, Montana, Reservations, small herds of buffalo and elk were established.

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